

Choosing Your Response to Stress

Grade Level	Seventh
Minimum Time Required	50 Minutes
Materials/Resources	"Stress Management for Teens" Handout
Subject Area(s)	Guidance Health

Project Description:

1. Hand out the worksheet to students and read "Ideas to Remember".
2. Have students complete part I. Discuss their answers.
3. Hand out and review the information sheet "Making Healthy Choices."
4. Divide the class in small groups to complete Part II on the worksheet. Discuss each groups' answers.
5. Assign a daily review of the class response choice as a journaling activity.

Career Development Standard	Knowledge of the importance of growth and change.
Career Development Indicator	Demonstrate ways of responding to others when under stress.
Delivery Level	Review
Academic Standards	
Language Arts	1.1.c Use prior knowledge and experience to interpret and construct meaning from various texts. 1.4.b Analyze the validity and/or appropriateness of various technical and practical materials. 2.4.a Write to clarify what is known about various topics. 2.4.a Write to synthesize, interpret, and use new information. 3.1.b Use various listening techniques in problem-solving and decision-making situations.
Employability/SCANS Skills	Thinking Skills, Basic Skills
Assessment/Rubric	Students will be evaluated based on their written assignment.





Name: _____ Date: _____

Recognizing Stress Signals

IDEAS TO REMEMBER

- ? MANY times you respond to stress with unthinking responses that are really bad habits.
- ? IT'S important to realize that most often you do have a choice about how you respond to stress.
- ? ONE effective strategy for beating stress is replacing bad habits with healthy choices to handle stressful situations in your life.

I. YOUR RESPONSES TO STRESS

-  **First**, list below five different stress situations that might occur in a regular day in your life (having to make a speech, talking for the first time with someone you'd like to get to know, etc).
-  **Beside** each listing, write how you would normally respond to that stressful situation (eat out nervousness, try to avoid the situation, etc.).
-  **Then**, look at your responses. Are they healthy, actually improving the situation? Or do they really make the situation worse, keeping you from your goals? Label each response "healthy" or "unhealthy".
-  **Finally**, for each situation you labeled "unhealthy" in your list, try to think of at least one different healthy response that you might substitute to handle the stressful situation.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Normal Response</u> <u>(Unhealthy/Unhealthy?)</u>	<u>Substitute</u>
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II. SUBSTITUTING HEALTHY RESPONSES FOR BAD HABITS

- ✍ **Read** the situations, bad habits, and alternate responses listed in Information Sheet 4: Making Healthy Choices, which accompanies this activity sheet.
- ✍ **In** the space below, try to suggest at least one other “bad habit” that teens might use to handle each situation on the Information Sheet and one healthy alternative response that might be substituted.

“Bad Habit” Response

Better Alternative

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

III. DAILY REVIEW OF YOUR STRESS RESPONSE CHOICES

Make one of your stress-fighting goals be: Never respond to stress just out of habit. Remember that there is usually a healthy alternative to every stressful situation.

Get in the habit of thinking about your day just before you go to sleep.

- ✍ For one week, ask yourself these questions every night:
 - ✍ Did I make any unhealthy choices in stressful situations today out of habit, rather than choosing healthy strategies?
 - ✍ Can I think of healthy choices to substitute next time I experience this stress?
 - ✍ What are my healthy stress response goals for tomorrow? What stresses can I anticipate? How will I handle them most effectively?

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Date: _____

Making Healthy Choices

Below you will find a list of common teen stress situations, followed by some bad habits that teens often use to deal with them.

Next to each poor choice is one suggested alternative that could meet the same stressful situation more effectively and healthfully.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>“Bad Habit” Response</u>	<u>Better Alternative</u>
1. Being too busy to eat lunch	x Eating candy for quick energy	+ Making time to eat earlier or later
2. Cramming the night before a big test	x Not getting enough sleep	+ Starting to study earlier
3. Feeling nervous before a date	x Drinking alcohol to “relax”	+ Calling a good friend to gain confidence
4. Feeling angry at a friend	x Overeating to handle your feelings	+ Sharing your feelings directly
5. Feeling down when your team loses an important game	x Yelling at family members	+ Taking a long walk to cool down
6. Feeling shy at a party	x Smoking to look as though you really belong	+ Risking talking to another shy person
7. Feeling overworked at your job	x Drinking cola or coffee to keep going	+ Reassessing your total school and work schedule
8. Handling a troubling situation at home	x Taking drugs to escape	+ Talking with an adult you trust